

## [Am I Right]

AM I RIGHT OR WRONG [?][?]

[md]

“— and you, fantasy Frank, and dreamworld Dora, and hallucination Harold, and delusion Dick,

and nightmare Ned...

What is it, how do you say it,

what does it mean, what's the word,

that miracle thing, the thing that can't be so, quote, unquote, but just the same it's true . . .”

KENNETH FEARING I I - HYGIENE JOE I

People ain't natural. They eat too much. You know, your stomach can hold maybe a pint. The majority of people cram a whole quart into it. What happens? Neuritis, arthritis, nephritis, colitis and so forth.

Take the question of sex. Majority of people are sex perverts.

Overdo it. Can't stay away from the wife. Got to adulterate her. Animals don't do that, insects neither. It ain't natural. You can sit near a fire ; you don't have to lay right in it, do you? You can smell poison, can't you ; you don't have to go ahead and drink it. You can drink water, you don't have to drown in it. Am I right or wrong?

Most natural place in the world is the Carribbeans Caribbeans. Plenty of fruit and you never get constipated. I was there six years ago. Before that I was just an honest dope.

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You know, work alla all the time, worrying and take everything serious. Well, suddenly I started in using my eyes and I saw an awful lot, I'm telling you.

For instance, I discovered the less a guy works the more money he's making. After a while, I started in working less, see? I figured - you know the way I figured. But something went wrong with the idea. The less I worked the less I was making. But I still figured the same way. So I tried it again. I worked less and less. And sure enough I got less. Well, finally, I worked less and less and less, and then I stopped altogether. I'm stubborn.

You know. Once I get an idea, I don't let go. So I got fired. So I thought I'd blow the stink off and I goes down to the Carribbees Caribbees. That was heaven.

Soon as I can , I'm going to work on that problem again. Go and find me another job, and find out what was wrong with my system. So far as I can see, personally, it was all right.

But the most natural way of all is like the way I'm doing now.

Not working at all. It's the most hygienic. How does it strike you, am I right or wrong? Out See copy [?] I - AM I RIGHT OR WRONG?

"Forget the answers that give no reason, forget the reasons that do not explain."

(A thin man sits modestly on a bare park bench, one bony leg folded over the other, his veiny hands resting in his sunken lap. The long face is deeply lined but peaceful, the old shoes are [?] but polished, the worn trousers are glossy but pressed. There isn't the faintest worry in the shrewd blue eyes.)

People ain't nacheral. Dey eat too much. Ye know, yer stomach kin hold maybe a pint. De majority uh people cram a whole quart inta it. What happens? Neuritis, arthritis, nefritis, colitis an' so forth.

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Take de question uh sex. Majority uh people are sex poivlots. Ovuhdo it. Can't stay away from de wife. Got to adulterate her. Animals don't do dat, insects neider. It ain't nasheral. Ye kin sit near a fire, ye don' have to lay right in it, do yuh? Ye kin smell poison, cancha, ye don' have to go ahead an' drink it. Ye kin drink water, ye don' have to drown in it. Am I right or wrong?

Mos' nacheral place in de woil' is de Caribbeans.

Plenty a froot an yuh nevuh get constipated. I wuz dere six yeehs ago. Before dat I wuz just an honest dope. Yuh know, work all a time, worryin and take everything serious.

Well, suddenly I started in usin my eyes an I saw an awful lot, 2 I'm tellin yuh.

Fir instance, I discovered de less a guy works the more money he's makin. Aftuh a while, I started in workin less, see? I figgered - you know de way I figgered. But sumthin went wrong wid de idea. De less I woiked de less I wuz makin. But I still figgered de same way. So I tried it again. I woiked less n less. An sure enuff, I got less. Well, finally, I woiked less n less n less, and den I stopped altogether. I'm stubborn. You know. Once I get an idea, I don't let go. So I got fired.

So I thought I'd blow de stink off and I goes down to de Caribbees.

Dat wuz heaven.

Soons I can I'm goin' to work on dat problem again.

Go an' find me anodder job and find out what wuz wrong wid my system. Nacherally, so fars I kin see, personally, it wuz all right.

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But de Mos' nachera way of all is like de way I'm doin now. Not woikin at all. It's de most dygienic. How does it strike yuh, am I right or wrong? II - I GOT AN AMERICAN SPINE WITH A HEART FROM THE OLD WORLD "What will you say and where will you turn?

What will you do? What will you do? What will you do?" (An aging Bronx Jew whom unemployment has robbed of status as father, husband, lover and breadwinner. He married young and worked hard, filling his household with squawks and rages, although fulfilling all his duties and satisfying all his appetites. When his wife took over his place as breadwinner, he embarked on a frustrated career as vagabond. Now he finds he hasn't either the health or inclination. He is only a tired old man. His narrow brown eyes are inflamed, and his lips, although still thick and red, smack with an empty hopeless sound as he talks.)

Go hang yourself with your own necktie. When I'm fifty years, an old man, I'm strolling around with my hands in my pockets. I'm suddenly a vagabond. I'm telling you I got specks in my eyes. I'm screaming in my sleep, I'm ain't human no more.

After all, human nature is four things, ain't it?

Clothing, food, shelter and recreation. In the morning you wake up, the first thing you put on your clothes, the second the belly starts in to talk, so you gotta got to eat. The third thing you want recreation. So you get tired out, then you gotta got to lay down. But where in the bed? We ain't animals, 2 they can sleep in a hole in the ground, nature gave them their own clothing. About insects, we ain't talking neither - bedbugs and mosquitoes - their whole life is recreation.

What shall I do? I ain't a tub of wisdom, I'm a plain old man. Like they say around here, I ain't a thoroughbred. Suddenly it's a different world. Yesterday I'm sure a thing is wrong, today somebody is doing it. So if somebody is doing it already, it can't be wrong?

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I'm completely turned around. I'm a not, N-O-T.

It's the world of the doughnut and the hot dog. Nothing balances.

An old man was asking them for a blanket last week, I saw it with my own eyes, they sent him to the hospital. First they kill you, then they are putting a pillow under your head.

Look, my face. Such a face you don't get laying in the lap of lady luck. It's three years already - I come home three o'clock in the morning the kids are in bed , but my wife she's dressed up to kill. Sarah, what's the matter? I ask. She says: I'm going out. What out? I say. In the middle of the night, out? Go to bed, Sarah.

She says: You go to bed, I'm going out. So a whole month I worried and complained and talked and finally she threw me out of the house altogether. What could I do? It was 3 her property, I was depending on her. I was no more a man, you understand, not human, so she threw me out, twenty-six years we was married. The Bible tells you when Abraham was an old man the people, they sent him in a young girl she should make him young again. But am I Abraham they should do this with me? Impossible! Go got born all over again!

A question: was I really born? Or maybe God dropped as through a hole in the sky and I ain't born yet.

Dead I ain't neither. I'm like stuck in a sewer pipe. I'm in it, I'm stuffing it up and they're pushing me down in the river, the East River or the Hudson River, I got no choice.

Back I can't go. It's too late. Like yesterday - I was standing on the breadline. Was it yesterday? What is it today? Tuesday? That's right, yesterday I was standing there and suddenly a cop hollers: Back up. Two hundred people on the line, he says to them back up. So he started in to shove. in two minutes there was a fight with three broken heads. You can't back up no more.

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One thing I'm finished with livin living and lyin lying , like they say here. The whole life it's like a cough, and when you're living it's like sucking cough drops - it don't help the poor people. And of course the rich people nothing helps no more — it's like a lot of pigs eating pigs' knuckles.

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What can I do? I got an American Spine sping but with a heart from the old world.

The only thing it's a good God, a wise God, he won't let me live long. That's all. III A ONE-MAN BOYCOTT OF THE UNIVERSE “As time, time, time slips between the fingers and flows through the heart time after time it comes to this, it is a question of time.”

(This high-strung sidewalk intellectual is wiry and swarthy with oily skin and greasy eyes.

His mouth is twisted between self-pity and bitter contempt.

A permanent grimace of satire is on his lips. He earns carfare and coffee-and by selling a scathing broadside against Hitler. A habitue of the New York Public Library, he rounds out his nervous denunciations of dictatorship with cullings from encyclopedias and thesaureses.)

I am a scholar of cosmos, my contemporary friend.

Cosmology, histology, pathology, neurology, astro-physiology and the whole tautology of existence are my fields. Is there a design, a scheme, a plan in this world? No, I declare, no, no and again no.

The world is tottering toward catastrophe, my friend, it in suffering fluctuations, alterations, transformations, - in short, flux. In order to save their front lawns and limousines, the economic royalist gang of psychopaths, paranoiacs, neuresthenics and megalomaniacs - in short, butchers - are 2 are plotting to delude, deter, detract, deceive, extort us with

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nationalism, patriotism, aryanism, racialism - in short, LIES. Everywhere trepidation, hallucination, anxiety prevail. In short, jitters.

The poor people may vacillate, fluctuate, hesitate and - waver. But, my contemporary, they will win their revenge.

The disinherited will have their cosmic revenge. I promise it. Picture for yourself, for example, their grave and ours. First, ours. Look at me. I'm emaciated, dessicated, lacerated, withered - in short, dried up. Imagine me dead. I'm lying there like a schlemiel in a cheap coffin of warped, bleached, knotty lumber - in short, a pine box. Along come the worms - the round worms, the flat worms, the earth worms, the tape-worms - in short, worms. They're wriggling and squirming, they're searching for something to eat that's nutritious and nourishing. They smell here, they smell there, nibble a piece here, a piece there. Phooey. Like an old baked apple. Every bite produces nausea, dizziness, wind, loss of appetite. I'm left in peace.

Now the scene shifts. It is now J. P. Morgan's grave.

A box of delicate wood, of sensitive fibre, of finest grain.

A corpse that's fresh and rich and succulent - summers in Bar Harbor, winters in Palm Beach. It's a toothsome bit of softig carnivorae. In short - stuffed kishke. Now - enter the worm.

He's still suspicious from his meal at my grave. A cautious 3 sniff and a nibble and - HA-HA-A-A-A-AH! What have we here?

Ach du Lieber. No meal or lunch or dinner but a repast a banquet rare, a feast. He rings the dinner gong and they all come running in droves - the ring-worms, the earthworms, the round worms, the flat worms, the tapeworms and presto! it's a skull and bones. You see? It's the cosmic revenge of the poor.

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But not for me. No, my contemporary. I must have my revenge now, now, now. Who can trifle with lockouts, walkouts, walkins, sitdowns, sleeping? I was never hired, so I can never be fired.

My strike is a one-man boycott of the whole world. You see?

I blockade the universe.

Now look into the future. Cast your imagination into the crystal globe. Every day more and more people out of work, every day more and more joining my ranks, year by year more and more and more - millions and billions throughout the world—. Are you following me? Do you see the vision, the apparition, the overpowering apocalyptic panorama? A whole world, my friend, without a single person at work....

Colossal. . . .What?. . . . What keeps me from going mad?

Why, words, my contemporary, just words. IV TIME, O TIME, TURN BACK IN THY FLIGHT “The metropolitan dive, jammed with your colleagues, the derelicts; the skyscraper, owned by your twin, the pimp of gymdrops and philanthropy; the auditoriums, packed with weeping creditors, your peers; the morgues, tenanted by your friends, the free dead . . .”

(A war and a depression have made this veteran a mental cripple at forty. There are deep furrows in his thin big-boned face and his hands tremble. All he has left is a wicked sentimental leer in the pale blue eyes. He was lying on the grass in Central Park with a derelict crony and yes-man. A “World's Fair broad” passed by and he straightened up quickly, put on his hat, coat and tie and went off to “make” her. From the back, he looked dapper and jaunty even if his clothes were creased.)

He who shuns wine, women and song is just a fool his whole life long. - Omar Kayyam.  
That guy was right. All o of these World's Fair broads passin passing up and down, real



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blousers, and I gotta got to lay on the grass an and watch. I oughta ought to take a stroll ta to Wall Street and draw some dough but it's too damm far. I tried to hock the Chrysler Buildin Building but they wouldn't take it.

Then I sold the Essex House but I couldn't collect. Now all I got is this dime and I'm lookin looking for its borthor. If I don't find it before tonight, I'll just hafta have to go up and sit down by the window and listen ta to the radio.

I ain't used ta to it. I hate them furnished rooms 2 since that taste of heaven my wife gimme. Player piano, books, radio. Full icebox - steaks, chops, the best. All she asked me ta to do was stay home and take care of the house.

When she come home at night she always threw a coupla couple of packs of cigarettes on the table.

Hell, I couldn't stand it. I felt like a housemaid, a goddam domestic, One mornin morning she left ninety cents for my lunch and the kid's, crackers when she come home from school, and a show. Well, I hocked the radio and bought a quart for the boys and we went to work on a coupla bottles.

When I woke up next mornin morning they wuz was gone. . . .

I guess I like layin laying in the grass too much. Tough work an and long hours only gets you an early grave, don't it?

Like my old man. Layin Laying under the ground there. Layin Laying there and laughin laughing . Son, he's sayin saying , you go ahead now, I'm layin laying down an and rest.

I didn't even give im him a Fathers Day present week before he died. I figured it's commercialism, anyway, it don't matter. If ya you ain't got the guts to remember your mother and father every day in the year and ya you gotta depend on phoney commercialism ya you don't deserve a mother, ya you deserve ta to be born from a pig, a

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whole litter, goddam it, a whole goddam litter. If my duaghter ever tries bringin bringing me candy on Fathers Day I'll kick er her in the can.

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If she an and her mother come back, I mean. I keep my soul full of hope. I ain't layin laying down like my old man an and take a rest. I read in the papers some idle rich guy shut himself up in his room, it was the Essex House, and stuffed up the windows and the door and got imself gassed up.

Must of been too dark so he decided to find his way out. He lit a cigarette. He found his way out all right. Him and the whole room there blew outa the window. . . . O time, O time, turn back in thy flight and make me a kid again just for tonight. Ya know what I'd do, if I ever decided to sort of take a rest, take a long swim out in the ocean. After a while I'd get tired but I'd keep on swimmin swimming and then I'd get so tired I couldn't lift my arms at all. Then I'd get scared and turn around and swim for shore but I'd never reach it, see? I'd try like hell to get back and I'd go under tryin trying .

It'd be like life that way, ya you wanna want to live but ya you gotta got to die..

Lissen, ya you sure ya can't gimme the brother ta to this dime? Or do I hafta have to go down ta to the river bank and draw a coupla breaths of air? . . . Ya you just as broke as I am? . . .

Talkin sure gets ya you nowhere fast.

I gotta got to amscray outa here quick. This grass city is only a paradise for pigeons. [V ROT GUT, BOOZE, AND BEER?] O WHY WERE THEY BORN

“...O, stead fast pauper, O, experienced vagrant...O, still unopened skeleton, O, tall and handsome target, O, neat, thrifty, strong, ambitious brave prospective ghost...”

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(This giant of a patriarch with his lean stomach and hard-boned shoulders, waves his lean arms in large preacher-like gestures. He strides around, yells, stops short, whines, intones, rants, barks to the howling amusement of the crowd.

His untrimmed hair flows to his shoulders, his heavy grey beard conceals a red mouth, his blue eyes are mean and mischievous and his nose is a hard beak. An actor always, he enjoys the attention, even the contempt, of the crowd, since he is superior to it.)

SH-A-A-AVEN AND SHO-O-O-ORN!.....

Listen, God desired to put hair on a man's face so he put it there. Woman he desired to make beautiful so he made her face smooth. On man's face he put wonderful ha-a-a-air....GOD made ME a MAN!...SHEEP. SLAVES...Where's your individuality? Where's your personality? Where's your singularity?.... .....WHY were you BORN? Slavery! SLAVERY!...You! Why don't you shave your head, TOO? .... Half men. Women. WOMEN! IMITATION MEN...[BOO?]-eater!

SWINE-EATER! .....Rat ... Rot -gut. Swine. Booze and BEER ..... O-O-O-OH!

SHA-A-A-AVEN A-A-And .... SHO-O-O-ORN! (BREAKS INTO SONG) 2 They look so pitiful, so sad So miserable, s-o-o-o forlorn.... And they wander, o-o-o-h they w-a-a-a-nder O w-hy-y-y were they born To be shaven and shorn.... COWARDS!....COWARDS! .... O-O-O-O-H - H-E-E-E is an average man. Go all the world around. Six months in jail and six months out He IS an average man. (MORE. MORE.) They act so very queer When they are full of RAT ROT -GUT! SWINE! BOOZE AND BEER! Right here on Union Square..... BAH! In contempt - While the drunken nuts Talk away I-I-I-I just walk away. (DON'T WALK SO FAST. WE'LL GET BLISTERS ON OUR FEET....HERE, CHICK, CHICK, CHICK, CHICK.....) Cowards. Cowards....Sneak! Freak!...Go back to the coffin, all of you. IT'S FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL, [HUH?] "With one mere hour, one more night, one more day somehow to be killed."

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(This adolescent is like Walt Whitman's child who "went forth and whatever object he looked upon, he became." He is still searching for his identity. The girl face, the goat mouth, the shipping clerk hands with the scarred knuckles don't piece together into the lank hundred pounds of elbows and knees. Loose impulses flash in and out of the tired grey eyes squinting against the sun. His words come out now vague, now blunt, but always puzzled.)

I could turn out to be the biggest success if it wuzn't wasn't for one thing - I can't play dirty tricks on people.

I dunno don't know , I like to be with the guys that are buckin bucking it, not duckin ducking it, ya [you?] know what I mean? I despise the suckers. I'm this the depression generation - I can't wait. I gotta got to go off and do sumthin something big right away. Get sumthin something virgins and play it. Play it big. But nuthin nothing happens around here. Why is that? Some man I wuz talkin was talking to in the park here once told me about Moses, how he used to go around like this too until he got disgusted. After a while, he said, the older guys they died off, then Moses wuz was boss. Is that a fact? I gotta got to wait the same as Moses? It's from time immemorial, like the man said? My personal idea [,?] if things wuz was different I could 2 amount to sumthin something . I could be a leader maybe. A Capone, a Schultz, one a of them, not one a of the mob. Like Moses - way on top. Why not? I come from smart people, I got what it takes, I catch on quick to anything....Hey lookit. Them two girls holdin holding each other around. Is it true about them? Jeez, [?] what a shame. They'ra They're pretty.... Didja Did you ever read the Well of Loneliness? I did. I get the best books outa out of the library, it don't help. I dunno don't , books don't do me no good. Why is that?

What's wrong with me anyhow? I gotta got to snap out of it...One time last spring I hitch-hiked to Philly for three days. It's a funny thing, hitch-hiking, maybe you got a million worries on your head but you hit the road and everything disappears like magic, you forget everything. When I got back to New York it wuz was one in the morning. I didn't feel like

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goin going home so I come over to the park here and I laid down right on this bench and stood there all night. There wuz was other guys on the other benches and I laid there with my eyes open and looked up at the stars and before I knew it the sparrows wuz was singin singing in the trees. I dunno don't , I don't never feel lonely in this park, I like it here. I sorta sort of find friendship, I guess. That's important, ain't it? That's the dreamy side of me, I suppose.

I like it that way....Sumtimes [Sometimes?] I go to a movie, then I walk around thinkin. [Lotsa?] thinking. Lots of things. The whole world. Money, for instance. Supposin Supposing I won a big prize. What would I do ? Would I spend it or put it away in the bank or would I go nuts?

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Sometimes I go to the movies twice a week and I play this game Screeno. Every day somebody in winnin winning, I never won once.

That way I'm different from other people. No luck. Ya You know if I won? I'd go ahead and buy a whole outfit and sail off to some island. Some place nobody ever gone before. In Africa or Australia or South America. One of them places. I'd buy a gun and a knapsack and breeches and boots and a knife and a [mackinaw?] and I dunno don't , I guess I'd travel. Nowhere in particular.

Just travel around....And then again, maybe I wouldn't.

Maybe I'd spend the whole money on my old lady. Send her out to Lakewood for the winter. Ya You see what I mean? There's two sides to my nature. What's the difference? I don't win anyhow.

Maybe I don't deserve it. I wuz was always the flower of the class - the bloomin blooming idiot. How hard I try I can't control myself from bein being bad. I'm always thinkin thinking

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of things that don't do me no good. Riddles and things - what's got no legs and walks, or what's got eyes and can't see, or what turns without movin moving .

The trouble is I got things on my mind. Jeez! When the stork brought me to my old lady he musta must have said to her: "Nuts to you, Madam . ".... ".... I dunno don't , it's too much for me, I can't make it out.

Maybe it's like that man said to me once; "It's from time immemorial, son." All I know this kinda kind of life in givin giving me pimples. I got no more moral standards. What do you think, that yeast stuff they talk about on the radio - is that good for pimples?

\*\*\*\*\* YOU CAN'T FIGURE ON A LIFETIME NO MORE "Tell how it was in some gayer city or brighter place, speak of some bloodier, hungrier, more treacherous time any other age, any far land."

(She is a thin, timid gum-chewing typist. The bones of her hips show beneath the gay dress for Klein's, the wrist under the novelty trinket from Hearn's is too sharp, the calves of her legs are too skinny under her sheer hose, 69¢ special, the pale chestnut hair too Garbo-like against the anxious eyes. If you took the bravery out of the smile and the baby trust out of the eyes you'd have a skeleton wage slave with dreams of an island and Brain Aherne. In fact, if you struck her too deep, the eyes would fill with helpless, angry tears.)

My boss, that nosey thing, he was always sittin sitting on me with them over-developed muscles until I got sick and tired.

Where I got the incentive that day I don't know.

Maybe it was because I was wearing white, I like white, I wear everything with a white collar, it makes me feel good.

The boss was in the front with a big customer, I was sitting there and typing like my heart would break, I was hankering for life. Rose, I said to myself, in this day and age you can't

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figure on a lifetime. Marriage is getting pushed further and further in the background, if you're single it's no 2 stigma. I got up from my desk, I opened the boss's door and I yelled: Look, Mr. Sternberg, you can wait a hundred years and you'll never got a typist like me. Look at my hair, my white blouse, my nails. I never look unruly, I'm never idle a minute, and I got artistic ability besides. Next payday I want twelve dollars. [ It's a Jewish trait. In front of a customer a goy would think , but say something? Never. ] He opened up his big mouth right away and pushed out his muscles and he yelled: Miss Rosenthal, see me in the back. The most terrible thing, you understand, see me in the back. I don't know, I wasn't even scared. I was in the mood of makin making money, nothing bothered me.

Listen, don't you think they know if you're worth it to them?

They got big mouths but they know if you're worth it, don't worry. You think he fired me?

I'm telling you from that day until he lost his business he was so nice to me - like my office boy, he used to bring me up milk shakes. He was at my beck and call.

Before he was sitting on me, in the future everything was in reverse, I was sitting on him. I'M A MIGHT-HAVE-BEEN “Are you, in fact, a privileged ghost returned, as usual, to haunt yourself?”

(This stooped over park-bench-philosopher with his hands in his pockets started talking when they put him on relief and he won't stop until they put him back to work. Worry has made his face pasty and he makes sure to sleep as little as possible so he can exhaust himself into tolerating his world. He is in his late thirties, of average height and his solid body has grown fat through disuse.)

I admit it, I'm a hog. In other words human. I enjoy women and a pair of doughnuts like anybody else. Say tomorrer tomorrow I wake up I'm covered in communism, say I can go and get what I want by asking—I want six wives. You maybe want 24 suits and him, they gotta [?] got to give him twelve yachts — otherwise he's miserable.

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We're nuts, we're all deprived so long we went nuts. Plain hogs.

It's chemical, you can't do nothing. We're 90% water, H<sub>2</sub>O, etc.

and 10% miscellaneous—sodium helium oxygen hydrogen potassium phosphorus calcium and so forth. In this kinda kind of world 2 plus 2 makes 5. Look at me. [True??] I'm among the world of missing men.

I'm so insignificant if they sent out a radio call for me a 2 hundred years nobody would find me. I am a dirt monkey. I could write my whole will on a postage stamp, not a single coin of the realm you'll find in my pocket, I ain't got enough real estate to put in a flower pot. Then why should I sing my country 'tis of thee or welcome sweet springtime I greet you in song? And yet, my friend, you can never tell the way you stand by the way you're sitting down. Listen to what I'm gonna going to say to you now,—the bacteriologist of today was himself a bacteria in primeval times. Sh! Think that over....

Myself, I'm a might-have-been. I could tell you something else—I'm a genius and so forth, after all, you're a stranger to me. But it ain't what you call yourself, you can say you're Jesus and you ain't even St. Patrick. True? Most of my life I was lost inside a sweat shop like a fly in winter time.

You go into it a man and you come out [cock-eyed?] [cockeyed?] hunchbacked knockkneed [pigeon-toed?] [pigeontoed?] flatchested—you're a wash rag and a walking prospect for the undertaker. You gotta got to put a mark on your feet to know right from left. The gray matter and the different parts of the cerebellum are deflated.

So I was fired. The boss said he gotta got to make sacrifices he started with me. Before, I was lost, after I was still worse. I had bicycles in my brain. I was [?] always asking myself: [always?]



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Am I coming from or going to? Here I was free, the whole day in the air, in the sun, but still I was groping, the park and the shop was the same.

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One swallow don't make a summer. When you're alone you can bark at the moon like a boogie dog, you can go sit down on the ground and open up your mouth you'll catch mosquitoes, that's all. A chain is strong like its weakest link and that was me. I don't say I didn't let off a lotta lot of hot air in them trying times, it's a free country. I lived by my own oxygen.

But also — we got a check and balance system here, there ain't no dictatorship, nobody gets away with murder, you can manifest yourself, true, you can express yourself, but the other guy can check up on you if he wants to.

Well, I got plenty checking up but in the end [?] I was a citizen of the world. I didn't bow down to the dollar, I was international, a progressive. I followed the head, you understand, the others followed the rear end, they were retro-gressive.

You find some people in this day and age they like to be both.

If they're down in the Battery they're up in the Bronx too, these budweisers, these political fakers. They claim if you're in a steam room at the highest temperature you're freezing and if you go into a frigidaire you're hot. Why does ice smoke?

They tell you: because it went crazy with the frost. They're always arguing: if it's hot as it's warm while it's freezing it should be cold you think it's gonna going to be hot? Bah! I wouldn't stoop myself so low. The average man should think twice before he speaks and then — shut up.

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Which reminds me — ain't it time for me too? Here I'm riding a whole cavalry of ideas and I ain't got enough to buy doughnuts. If I had my life to live over again I'd choose an existence of plenty. Otherwise it's better for us to shut our eyes, the undertaker downtown got a special this week.

Which means this, this whole spiel. It's an explosion, I mean an explanation, of one thing — I got cursed with a social consciousness and how much I would like to do something about it I can't. Brain I got plenty, but the will power of a Chinese Eskimo. THANK GOD FOR COLUMBUS "...restores faith to the flophouse, workhouse, warehouse, whorehouse, bughouse life of man...

(A shy little man wearing a droopy black suit, the sleeves and trouser legs of which are too long for the little arms and legs. The black eyes are round and clear, although the faintest reflection of pain brings out the veins, and he shudders at even the suggestion of cruelty and violence, yet he radiates a quiet faith in himself and [unnatured?] pride and courtesy. He was caught serenading the cashier behind the cafeteria counter with rendition of the song:

My Love Is Like an Evening Prayer.

His voice is big and resonant.)

Yes, it's a wonderful voice. And it ain't no expense neither. A little eggnogg, some Heide's pastilles and it comes out clear like a canary. That's my nickname in the sewer - Sam, the Canary. Rough laborers, they ain't artistic and sensitive like girls, but they call me the canary, they gotta got to , on account of my voice. I don't mean my voice. I hate to say I, my. It's a born voice, that's all. It happens by accident it's mine. It's a pleasure. It's an inspiration, it given me a good appetite, it makes me happy. Except at night — I eat two cups of coffee and supper, I feel so heavy it gets screechy. I'm too tired, it effects affects

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the voice, you 2 understand. The slightest thing makes it screechy. I didn't know till three, four years ago I even had it. Nobody told me.

My wife never told me. She tried to kill it, even. She was a nervous woman, irritable - a born naggard. She put me on a pedestal and made an idol out of me, then she knocked me off.

I got annulled.

I went to work in the sewers for WPA. It was an accident - one day I was shovelling and I began to sing. The boys hollered for an encore. I was surprised. It was an inspiration, it put life into them. Since that time everybody calls me Bing Crosby, Junior, because I'm an amature. Your whole life you go around, nobody tells you, nobody is decent enough, now I'm Bing Junior.

My uncle had a baby he named him Dennis. So what?

The kids on the block call him Ziggy. Foolishness. My name is Sam Rosen, plain, I don't care who asks. June 6th I'm singing in A Low's Theater Amature Hour, shall I go and change my name? I'm a city-wide amature. 501 Madison Avenue, that's WNEW there, downstairs is a confectionery, they gave me an audition, they give me auditions all over. I sing in one room they listen in another room over the microphone, the receiver, the amplifier, whatever you call it. Then when I'm through, I hear them say: "Thank you." It's an inspiration, the way they say it. "Thank you." Most of the time they ask for an encore, too. It's an exhilaration exhilaration , you get a better appetite, you don't feel like an appendage. Today it's so busy by slack everybody is demoralized. They don' know where to look. If a person looks up at the sky and somebody whispers he's a Messiah, they 3 follow him. They don't know no better, they're looking for an inspiration. Like on Forty Second Street, let one person only look up, everybody is looking.

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My inspiration, I need to serenade a girl. When I hear the call of nature, to satisfy my cravings, follow my sex nature, I need a mate. But I can't locate her. I got a good nature, I'm quiet, not like other laborers, but since I'm annulled I can't locate my ideal. I'm going to a matrimonial bureau. A friend of mine, I know him a long time. He's opening a new office now on 42nd Street, he's sending me a post card, he expects to get the American type, educated. I'm looking for a lady with a brother or a father they're in business and they'll allow me to work for them.

I'm not satisfied with the girls he got now. They're fat or they're widows or they got children. Only one girl, she was slim, with [a?] good skin, three inches taller than me, we clicked right away. But when we got through talking in the office there, I asked her telephone number, she said: "Get a steady job, I'll keep company." That ain't my ideal. Go get a steady job.

At what? Fixing fountain pens?

The only thing I got to depend on is the voice. The sewer work in only ten eleven days a month so the rest of the time I go to school. I take up French, acting, I learn dancing, classical dancing, even fencing. For poise, you understand.

Like a real opera singer, only it don't cost we a penny. It's WPA culture courses. It's a pleasure, an inspiration. Thank God for Columbus.